
Memorandum for:

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The attached memorandum was done for
the DCI at his request.

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7 November 1983

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**Office of European Analysis
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MEMORANDUM

Turkey: The General Election

According to unofficial returns, Turgut Ozal's independent Motherland Party won a plurality in Sunday's legislative election. The poor showing -- a distant third place -- by the military-backed Nationalist Democracy Party appears to have stunned and demoralized the ruling generals.

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Although there is a small chance, in our view, that the military council will invalidate the election, we believe on balance that President Evren will let the results stand. The very fact that the President permitted the Motherland Party to participate in the election, while excluding 12 other parties, suggests to us that he is open to the idea of working with Ozal. Moreover, we doubt that there are major policy differences between Evren and Ozal. Beyond this, voiding the results of the election would give substance to foreign criticism of the military regime. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe condemned the election as undemocratic weeks before it was held, and West European nations undoubtedly have been watching the election process for any signs of impropriety. Far more important, any attempt to alter the results at this point probably would, in our view, trigger a domestic uproar that could bring into question the legitimacy of the military council and perhaps even topple Evren.

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The election results make clear that Evren's popularity and prestige have eroded since his election as President in 1982.

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The key to the stability of the civilian government will be the distribution of seats in parliament. The results of this process will not be known until the end of the week. Under Turkey's complicated electoral system it is possible for a party to receive only a plurality of the popular votes but a majority of the legislative seats. If the Motherland Party were to gain a majority in the 400-seat parliament, Evren would probably have no choice but to cooperate with Ozal in forming a government.

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It is more likely, however, that none of the three parties will have a majority of seats and therefore be able to form a government alone. Evren probably would prefer a coalition between the Populists and the Nationalist Democrats, but he may have to accept a coalition led by the Motherland Party. If so, an MP-NDP government would almost certainly be the President's preferred alternative. In any event, the three parties have all vowed to continue the policies of the military regime. Thus, the civilian government likely to emerge in the next week or so probably will not make major changes in Turkey's domestic and foreign policies, even though it will be less of a rubber stamp for Evren than an NDP administration would have been.

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